

Simple Simon

Down the timeless road he treads
goaded by ambition's knout;
both pockets bulging with a fist --
in one hand truth, the other doubt.

Poor Simon, bread is not his staff;
he craves the perfume of the rose.
He feeds upon the breast of love,
yet claims the world corrupts his nose.

Quite young, he found the why of myth
hidden in the looking glass --
related to the ritual
performed by him at Sunday mass.

Like Cain, he put his faith in might --
made it a manner of belief
to hide the dark hole in his soul
devoured by the moths of grief.

His star has set behind the moon;
he walks with ghosts. Like Adam, he
found his Eden a land of pain --
both took the tree too literally.

Too late he learned that politics
killed the good samaritan --
the peak of ignorance is steep.
Time's diameter is man.

The Voyage Out

"What are the stars -- what are the stars?"

-- S. O'Casey

Plunge on, sailors of the solar sea,
go and catch a flying saucer,
test Gabriel's horn in your radar,
tell Mercury his wings are dated,
waltz the Spiral Nebula
round and round the firmament.
Feast your eyes on Crab and Pisces,
drown your thirst in the Big Dipper,
snatch a ring from Saturn's orbit,
usurp the crown of Jupiter,
catch comets in the Milky Way,
climb the Polestar, take a peek
at Uranus, the freak --
the red giants and the white dwarfs.

Lift the methane veil from Venus,
follow Orion and his bright dogs,
track Leo to his ancient lair,
bury the monstrous myth of Mars,
ride the Goat and bait the Bear.
Brand Taurus with steel satellites,
plumb the depths of Pluto's realm,
the asteroid islands in Neptune's bay.
When Pegasus begins to buck,
throw your horoscope away
and trust the Sun, your warm friend --
an orange clown with a hot foot.
Before you kiss the Pleiades goodnight,
weigh your wits in Libra's scales,
nail envy on the Southern Cross,
and wash your sins in the blood of the Ram.
Dismiss time from your mind, but see
that wonder called Eternity --
all planets are his children.
His wife is the four headed wind,
and dancing is their destiny.
Enjoy the cosmic carnival,
but don't ask the vacuum for a clue
to all the answers promised you.

Listen Joe

"Death is unAmerican!" -- Joe Doakes

This is America
where everybody wears a jukebox-smile,
and believes in instant heaven.
Ask any business man --
things wouldn't be the same
without death.
War would be a senseless game.
The Heart Fund needs him;
he helps slum clearance with a match.
He's chairman of the A.M.A.,
the V.I.P. of every cancer drive --
supporting the Red Cross
with famine and flood.
Impartial as a sleeping pill,
he sends jet pilots like cool jazz
and draws no color line
when the chips are down.
Each year the Auto Club
pays tribute to his industry
and holiday spirit.
Where I come from,
we take off our hat
to death and the flag --
people honor them with flowers, folksongs,
and monuments.
If you think this is unAmerican,
so is Life Insurance.